

A Brief History of Lace

Queen Elizabeth I, a high-profile 16th-Century laceophile, showing off one of her huge and highly fashionable ruffs. We don't think it would look out of place on the Louis Vuitton 2012 catwalk

Lace collars, lace caps, lace shawls, lacemakers - welcome to Northern Europe in the 17th century, home to a roaring lace industry. Lace was used to decorate everything from dresses to door knobs, a trend which thankfully doesn't seem to have translated to the 21st century

Henrietta Maria is said to have arrived in England to begin her marriage to Charles I with a horde of expensive possessions and luxury fabrics. Here the couple sport delightful his 'n' hers lace collars - again, a trend we're quite glad seems to have died out

If the next McQueen collection featured two models strutting down the catwalk in full body armour and lace, you'd probably say: "There goes fashion, being ridiculous again." To which we would reply, "Er, hello? Prince Charles Louis, Elector Palatine and his brother (painted here by van Dyck) were totally making this look their own in 1637"

Here's good old Marie Antoinette showing the people how it's done in an ornate lace-frilled number. Who ever said she was out of touch?

After its boom in the 1700s, lace had a slight dip in popularity until the late 1800s (cheers for that, Marie-Antionette). This woman, photographed in the 1890s, is coated head-to-toe in intricate layers of lace that would have been warm as well as elegant

A round of applause for Queen Vic who's showing a serious commitment to lace here in 1897. Note the matching veil, fan and skirt. We're fairly sure that the phrase 'you can never have too much lace' applies only to the royal family

The heyday of flapper chic in the 1920s, when the new 'BTK' length made for a much easier silhouette - often in lace. We'll just double check our July 1923 issue of Grazia to see if girls actually used BTK for 'below the knee' back then...

Lace and royal weddings really do go hand in hand. This ghostly figure is Lady Elizabeth Bowes Lyon (the late Queen Mum), marrying the Duke of York in 1923. Hang on, didn't Lily Allen Cooper borrow that veil for her wedding?

"I have stolen your granny's net curtains, and I won't give them back!" - we understand that is a verbatim quote from this dancer at the Moulin Rouge in Paris in 1926

A young Mexican woman poses in a black mantilla costume in 1928. We have a feeling that Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana might be rather well-acquainted with this image

Women making lace on the island of Burano, Italy in 1954. Dolce and Gabbana have been known to beam pictures like this onto their catwalk backdrops to emphasise the incredible craftsmanship lace-making demands

Here's Grace Kelly (who married in this elegant lace dress in 1956) having a terrible flash-forward to April 2011 when Sarah Burton paid homage (or brazenly ripped off) her style for K-Mid's royal nuptials

Queen Elizabeth II arrives at a Windsor cocktail party in 1959 wearing a lemon lace two-piece. Tighten up that skirt and make the the lemon fluorescent and you have Christopher Kane's Spring 2011 collection

A lace culotte suit by Biba, 1964 - proof that fancy lace can work with a more minimal silhouette too

Madonna struggles to pull off the cheap-stretchy-lace-workout-look in 1985, a trend that was nevertheless adopted by 94% of the world's teenage girl population at the time (figures may be very historically inaccurate)

Diana, Princess of Wales not at her wedding, incredibly, but at a dinner in Washington in 1985. The 'everyday wedding dress' is an extremely difficult look to pull off and absolutely not endorsed by the Guardian fashion desk

Prada's Fall/Winter 2008/09 collection was dedicated to the idea that lace should see a woman through life from birth to death. It kick-started a lace renaissance on the high street which has yet to wane

Are these the most instantly recognisable lace sleeves in the world? Duchess Catherine's Sarah Burton for McQueen dress has since spawned a million imitations as ordinary girls around the world get married in lace, just like a real princess

Broderie anglaise was the theme at Louis Vuitton's Spring 2012 show in Paris earlier this month. OK, so it's not actually lace, but it does tell us that the lace vibe is going to be huge next season too

Source: [theguardian](#), [DevilPlus](#)